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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 08/15/07

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ARTICLES:

- (1) State Minister in Charge of Okinawa Takaichi, Former Prime Minister Koizumi make visits to Yasukuni Shrine

ASAHI ONLINE (Abridged)
August 15, 2007 13:48 pm

Since this morning, Diet members have flocked to Yasukuni Shrine, making visits alone and in groups. Prime Minister Abe has maintained his ambiguous stance about visiting Yasukuni Shrine, refusing to say explicitly what he has decided. However, State Minister in Charge of Okinawa Takaichi paid a visit to the shrine at around 1:30 pm this afternoon. However, it seems that the other cabinet members will forgo visits to the shrine, meaning that the number of cabinet members who visited the shrine will be the fewest since 1985, when the official visits of then Prime Minister Nakasone's cabinet created a controversy. Meanwhile, former Prime Minister Koizumi paid a visit to Yasukuni Shrine at around 8:20 this morning.

Each year since 1985, anywhere from a handful to over a dozen cabinet members have visited Yasukuni Shrine on August 15, the anniversary of the end of the war, but this year, all cabinet members had stated that they had no particular plans to visit the shrine, indirectly hinting that they would forgo a visit. At a press conference on August 10, Takaichi stated: "I have no fixation (on making a visit) on the 15th. Going on that day may be a little difficult." Even at a press conference this morning, she said: "It is not a situation where I can quietly pray at the shrine." Yet according to those around her, right after making this statement, Takaichi "saw no security problems" and added a visit to Yasukuni into her afternoon schedule.

Koizumi arrived at Yasukuni by car and paid a visit to the shrine in a morning coat. According to a shrine official, he wrote down his personal name "Junichiro Koizumi" without using his title and paid for a floral tribute with his personal funds. Regarding the amount

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he paid for the floral tribute and the way in which he prayed at the shrine, the shrine official refused to comment saying: "We do not discuss the shrine visits of individuals."

This is the second year in a row that Koizumi has chosen to visit the shrine on the anniversary of the end of the war. After visiting the shrine, Koizumi didn't take any questions from the press and left the shrine without saying a word.

Makoto Koga, former Liberal Democratic Party Secretary-General and head of Nihon Izokukai (an association for bereaved families of that nation's war dead), also made a visit to Yasukuni Shrine this morning, but he did not go all the way inside. In a statement to the press, Koga said: "I visit the shrine every year on August 15. I paid memorial tribute to the spirits of all the war dead, not just my father (who died fighting in the war)."

(2) Anniversary of the end of the war: Lower House Chairman Kono seems to make critical statements about Abe in commemorative ceremony speech

MAINICHI ONLINE
August 15, 2007 12:51 pm

In a speech today at a ceremony to commemorate the nation's war dead, Lower House Chairman Yohei Kono offered his opinion that "thus far, (the people of Japan) have chosen the new regime, as symbolized by our Constitution, which contains a self-imposed restriction on the use of force abroad." In this statement, Kono appears to have Prime Minister Abe's mantra of "breaking with the postwar regime" in mind, and his words could be taken as a criticism of the prime minister - an unusual occurrence at a commemorative event.

Chairman Kono went on to say: "Keeping in our hearts the principles of the Constitution, which announces that we have given up war as a means of solving international conflict, we look towards realizing a world without war, a world without nuclear weapons, a world that operates not through revenge and intimidation, but rather through international cooperation." This statement emphasizes his support for the current Constitution.

Kono also touched on the comfort women issue, saying: "I offer my deepest apologies to those who suffered human-rights abuses, to those who suffered deep emotional wounds and continue to suffer to this day because of the inhumane actions of a part of the Japanese military." In 1993, Kono, who was then chief cabinet secretary, released a statement acknowledging the involvement of the Imperial Japanese Army and offered an apology. However, there are some lawmakers now calling for a review of the Kono Statement, citing a lack of evidence that the military coerced women into becoming sexual slaves. Kono's words today may be a way of trying to contain such moves.

(3) Studies of DPJ: Ozawa's influence seen in policy decision-making process; DPJ focuses on linking up with other opposition parties

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
August 15, 2007

With his party's victory in the July House of Councillors election, Minshuto (DPJ or Democratic Party of Japan) President Ichiro Ozawa's political presence has strengthened even more in the party. Ozawa

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said ahead of the election that he would retire from politics if the opposition failed to trade places with the ruling camp in the upper chamber. He now aims at totally grabbing the reins of government. He will be certain to place emphasis on "political maneuvering" and "joint efforts by opposition parties." Junior and mid-level lawmakers in the party, however, are concerned that the party will lose its style of policy-making through wide-ranging discussions. How far will Ozawa be able to extend his influence over the DPJ?

In the extraordinary Diet session, which ended on Aug. 10, the Upper House was supposed to wrap up its session with such minimum parliamentary proceedings as deciding on the seating arrangements and electing its president. However there was an unexpected event when the DPJ, Social Democratic Party (SDP), and People's New Party jointly submitted to the chamber a bill freezing by one year the postal-privatization program. Behind this lay Ozawa's strategy toward the Upper House.

The DPJ aims to form a joint parliamentary group. The party is 10 seats short of a majority in the Upper House. It will first need to win cooperation from the People's New Party, which has similar policies to it, in order to ensure the passage of bills the party will submit in the future.

On Aug. 7, Ozawa directed Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama and other officials to submit the bill. Kensei Hasegawa of the People's New Party briefed the bill to a DPJ meeting that started at 9:00 a.m. on Aug. 8. The party decided in a meeting of the "Next Cabinet" at 3:00 p.m. to entrust Policy Research Council Chairman Takeaki Matsumoto with the matter. The internal procedure on the bill, which was unexpected, was completed in just half a day.

In the DPJ, most policies used to be approved by the "Next Cabinet," in which Ozawa serves as "prime minister," after going through discussions at 13 "division panels," corresponding to such standing Diet committees as finance and internal affairs committees.

At last year's extra Diet session, the conservative group won "approval" in a meeting of the foreign and defense section of a bill upgrading the Defense Agency to the status of a ministry, views on which were divided in the party. As a result, the group was able to win the approval of Ozawa, who had opposed the bill.

Ozawa has let Upper House Chairman Azuma Koshiishi join meetings of his triumvirate that includes Hatoyama and Deputy President Naoto Kan, as well. This is because close cooperation will be indispensable more than ever. The DPJ intends to submit about 10 bills in the fall to the extra Diet session.

"Are you speaking it on behalf of the president?" Koshiishi warned in a meeting on Aug. 2 against Kan, who was going around broadcasting the strategy of submitting bills first to the Upper House.

There are many lawmakers, who came from labor unions, in the Upper House. Conservative lawmakers are alert to the possibility that the party won't be able to ignore views of Rengo (Japan Trade Unions Confederation), which made a significant contribution to the party in the Upper House race.

It remains to be seen how the three elements -- "Ozawa's directions," the "Upper House's individuality," and "labor unions" -- will be

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intertwined.

(4) Interview with DPJ Deputy President Naoto Kan: We will win in policy-making and in politics

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
August 15, 2007

-- During the "financial Diet session" held in 1998 (TN: the "financial Diet session" commonly refers to the 79-day extra Diet session held to deal with the a banking crisis and to split the Finance Ministry, separating its fiscal and financial into separate government agencies), when you were president (of the Democratic Party of Japan), the opposition parties successfully convinced the ruling party, which at the time had lost its majority in the Upper House, to accept all their demands.

"The government proposed a "bridge bank" bill, under which a public banking entity would take over operations, such as money lending, from a private banking institution that went bankrupt. However, even those in charge of practical affairs in the Liberal Democratic Party recognized that the proposal of the opposition parties to temporarily nationalize banks that had collapsed was better developed (than the LDP's proposal).

It was difficult to get then Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi to cooperate, as he said: 'When a government proposal is scrapped, people question the leadership of the administration.' He finally agreed when we clearly stated: 'Even if you support our (the opposition's) proposal, we will not make a political issue out of it.'"

-- However, "not making a political issue" (out of the financial proposals) caused a crack to open in the coalition of the opposition parties.

"While the LDP was negotiating with the opposition parties (over these proposals), it was also starting to make moves beneath the surface to form a coalition with the New Komeito. We were defeated by the LDP's vicious method of convincing a chunk of the opposition to join its side and were thus unable to topple the administration. This time, we must win in the arenas of politics and policy."

-- Is the alliance of the opposition parties solid?

"In the Upper House, the DPJ has obtained the post of president, chairing positions in committees and also has a stable majority. The coalition with the Social Democratic Party, the People's New Party and New Party Nippon is also strong, and we hope to communicate separately with the Japanese Communist Party. There may be moves by the LDP to absorb members of the opposition parties, but the difference in numbers between the ruling and the opposition parties (in the Upper House) is very large, meaning that the outcome will not be the same as it was in 1998."

-- Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is seeking the cooperation of the opposition parties in order to extend the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, which is set to expire on November 1.

"We will not respond to his requests for us to join his side of the wrestling ring. Our basic objective is to form a government that is not the current one. We must carefully maintain our oppositional

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axis. We will not fall for the LDP's political trick of trying to attract members of the opposition parties and obfuscate the issues. We won't be tricked by the LDP's political plots."

(5) Defense Ministry, NPA at odds over appointment of new vice defense minister

SANKEI (Page 3) (Full)
August 15, 2007

Defense Minister Yuri Koike met Administrative Vice Defense Minister Takemasa Moriya at the Defense Ministry yesterday to discuss her idea of replacing him. But the meeting ended inconclusively. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who met with Koike on the 13th to discuss the replacement issue, intends to replace Moriya with the Defense Ministry's Secretariat Director General Tetsuya Nishikawa, who previously worked for the National Police Agency (NPA), timed after he reshuffles his cabinet on Aug. 27. Moriya, though, has been strongly opposed to the appointment of Nishikawa as his successor, worried about a strengthening of NPA's authority.

In the meeting with Moriya, Koike insisted on appointing Nishikawa vice minister. Quoting Abe as saying to reporters: "Nothing has been decided on the appointment of a new vice minister," Moriya urged Koike to coordinate views with Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki. But Koike reportedly showed her displeasure, remarking: "I do not want to meet him on this matter again." Afterward, Koike told reporters: "We are making efforts to defend Japan, and not to defend ourselves."

The Defense Ministry and the Self-Defense Force have been criticized for their loose handling of defense secrets, as represented by the leaking of classified information on the Aegis system. By bringing in Nishikawa - a specialist in the information-security area, Koike reportedly is aiming to reform the ministry's lax nature.

In reaction, Moriya considers that the appointment of Nishikawa as vice minister could lead to strengthening the NPA's authority in the ministry. One Defense Ministry source also commented: "The NPA is eyeing the post of assistant deputy chief for security affairs in the Defense Ministry's secretariat. Should the NPA get the vice minister's post, it will have full command of security policy."

The post of administrative vice defense minister had been a reserve seat for NPA and Finance Ministry officials during the period between its establishment in 1954 and Seiki Nishihiro's assumption of the post in 1988. If the ministry has a "vice minister" Nishikawa, it will be the first time in 16 years for an NPA official to assume that post, the last person having been Tomoharu Yoda. Moriya's predecessor, Yasunari Ito, was also a career defense-agency official.

Moriya wants to see a career defense official to succeed him, because this will be the first personnel appointment since the Defense Agency was upgraded to ministry status. However, some people doubt their abilities, with a government source saying: "The series of information-leak cases exposed defense officials' lack of experience."

Prime Minister Abe told reporters at his official residence last evening: "We must pick a person who is proper for the office tasked with taking charge of security policy and protecting the people's

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lives and property."

Administrative vice ministers over the past two decades and the government offices they came from

1988 Seiki Nishihiro Defense Agency (Defense Ministry now)
1990 Tomoharu Yoda National Police Agency (NPA)
1991 Akira Hiyoshi Finance Ministry
1993 Shigeru Hatakeyama Finance Ministry
1995 Naoaki Murata Defense Ministry
1997 Masahiro Akiyama Finance Ministry

1998 Seiji Ema Defense Agency
2000 Ken Sato Finance Ministry
2002 Yasunari Ito Defense Agency
2003 Takemasa Moriya Defense Agency

(6) Peace for Japanese-Americans: Comfort women resolution shakes their self-identity

ASAHI (Page 2) (Excerpts)

In 1942 after Japan and the US plunged into war, the family of Mike Honda (66), a third-generation Japanese-American, was sent to Camp Amache in Colorado. The camp was surrounded by a vast stretch of desert. He clearly recalls that landscape, though he was one or two years old at that time.

Japanese-Americans were confined, though they had done nothing wrong. Many second-generation Japanese Americans died fighting at the war front in Europe.

Sixty-five years later, the infant confined to the camp is working as a Congressman at Capitol Hill in Washington, America's power center.

The full House on July 30 adopted a resolution seeking a formal apology from the Japanese government regarding the wartime comfort women issue. Immediately after the adoption of the resolution, Honda breathed deeply and shook hands with other Congressmen.

The Rafu Shimpo, a newspaper for Japanese-Americans in Los Angeles, carried a letter from a reader in July. The letter read: "It is absurd for a person with a Japanese face and name to adamantly seek an apology to comfort women from the Japanese government. The US has not offered an apology for the atomic-bombings. Will Mr. Honda be satisfied if all the Japanese commit harakiri?"

People in the Japanese society in Los Angeles are dismayed, wondering why a Japanese-American congressman is seeking an apology from Japan.

George Nakano, a third-generation Japanese-American, who served as a Californian State legislator in the same term as Honda did, noted, "I wonder whether this resolution is based on a humanitarian cause or for the sake of raising political funds."

Tamon Norimoto (32), who is taking part in the plan to develop a Japan town in San Jose, which is part of Honda's constituency, is unable to find an answer. He said, "I think the resolution is correct. I as an Asian support the resolution, but as a Japanese-American I am half-distressed."

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Honda can say Japanese words smoothly -- benjo (lavatory), jichan (grandfather), chanbara (sword battle), etc.

In the early 20th century, his grandfather and grandmother immigrated to the US from Kumamoto Prefecture. Since his mother was educated in Japan, she was unable to speak English. When he was a child, his mother tongue was Japanese.

His parents were tenant strawberry growers. In order to survive the postwar US society they sealed themselves off from the world. As a result, Honda only recalls words he used as a child.

I visited Honda at Capitol Hill several days after the adoption of the comfort women resolution. He said, "Japan is the home country of my grandfather and grandmother. I am proud of their culture. This face is a proof of my honor." I asked him, "Then why did you, who are a Japanese-American, call for an apology from the Japanese government over the comfort women issue?"

He replied, "If you ask me such a question, you can put a bag on my head. Even if I had black skin or brown skin, I would have done the same thing."

When he was young, Honda put much effort into a campaign demanding an apology from the US government over the relocation of Japanese-Americans. President Reagan signed the bill in 1988, 43 years after the end of the war.

He said, "The apology did not bring back the time lost and children who died. However, I felt we were right. We regained our dignity, if you like. "

Honda intends to continue calling for an apology while comfort women are still alive. He said, "We have won an apology from the US. That is why we must win an apology to comfort women as well." Is he staging this campaign, even though he is a Japanese-American or he does so because he is a Japanese-American? Honda repeated, pointing to his face and chest, "Please do not judge me by what I look like."

Reporter: Hiroki Manabe

(7) Japan's effort to provide aid to Africa bogs down (part 1): European countries, the US increase aid; China increasing presence through resource diplomacy

ASAHI (Page 3) (Excerpts)
August 15, 2007

The next G-8 Summit, which will focus on the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) and Africa assistance, is to take place in Japan next year. European countries and the US, which take a great interest in eliminating poverty in Africa, have boosted aid. China is also expanding assistance in an effort to obtain resources. However, Japan is facing a policy dilemma as its policy is to reduce aid to developing countries due to the fiscal-austerity policy. Japan is under pressure to find a breakthrough in this situation and extend as a global citizen a helping hand to people suffering from poverty.

Former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, chairman of the Japanese Association of Dietmembers League for Japan-Africa Friendship,

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stated at the Symposium Commemorating the Africa Day held in late May at the United Nations University in Tokyo: "The TICAD is considering assistance toward a bright direction. Prime Minister Abe's idea is to create an energetic Africa." He also stressed the meaning of the TICAD, which held its first meeting in 1993 and drew the world's attention back to aid to Africa.

However, diplomats from Africa made harsh requests with one saying: "We need a new TICAD. A mechanism for materializing talks is sought," and another noting, "The TICAD is not a talk show to speak about Africa alone."

The African Diplomatic Corps consisting of ambassadors from African nations pointed out in a letter of request addressed to the Foreign Ministry (MOFA), "It is questionable what impact the TICAD will have on the development of Africa and what it will bring to African countries."

Members of the African Diplomatic Corps are irritated, because contrary to the prime minister's call for creating an energetic Africa, Japan's aid to Africa is sluggish.

A mid-ranking Foreign Minister official responsible for relations with Africa lamented, "The end of money is the end of love. Japan's diplomacy toward Africa is up against a wall."

Japan's aid to Africa has declined for the fourth straight year since 2004, reflecting a reduction in the official development assistance (ODA) as a whole. Then it jumped from approximately 650 million dollars in 2004 to 1.14 billion dollars in 2005, following then Prime Minister Koizumi's announcement in April 2005 on his plan to double ODA to Africa over three years. However, major portions of the increase were debt forgiveness and yen loans. Grant aid almost leveled off.

China's positive advance into Africa is pressing Japan to reconstruct its policy toward Africa. In recent years, China has intensively increased ODA to Africa, based on resource diplomacy aimed at securing oil and rare metals. Forty-four percent of its foreign aid is for Africa. It is estimated to come to about 50 billion yen in monetary terms.

Africa welcomes China's policy, because it produces results quickly and is easy to understand. China is steadily increasing its impact, by making efforts to strengthen relations with African nations through visits by the president, the premier and the foreign minister and the invitation of a plenary meeting of the African Development Bank.

There is a deep-seated concern in MOFA that if China's influence increases in Africa, Japan would suffer a setback in collecting votes at international organizations, such as its bid to seek a permanent seat in the United Nations' Security Council. Director General for Sub-Saharan African Affairs Shuichiro Megata said, "We want to work on China to join the international community's effort to help Africa so that efforts by Japan and China will in the end lead to the development of Africa."

MESERVE